

REMARKS

Before entry of this Amendment and Response, the status of the application according to the pending Office action is as follows:

- The drawings are objected to under 37 CFR § 1.83(a);
- The specification is objected to;
- Claims 8, 9, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. §112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention;
- Claims 1-6, 8, 10, and 12-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by U.S. Patent No. 6,658,794 to Hansel et al. (hereinafter “Hansel”);
- Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansel as applied to claims 1-6, 8, 10, and 12-18 in further view of U.S. Patent Publication No. 2003/0145523 to Annes et al. (hereinafter “Annes”);
- Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansel as applied to claims 1-6, 8, 10, and 12-18 in further view of U.S. Patent No. 4,949,425 to Dodson et al. (hereinafter “Dodson”);
- Claim 9 is objected to as depending from a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Applicants hereby amend the specification. The amendments are supported at least at paragraphs [0035]-[0039] and [0042]-[0046] of the published application. No new matter is added thereby.

Applicants hereby amend claims 1 and 5 and cancel claims 8-23, as shown in the

preceding Listing of Claims. Claim 1 was amended to include the allowable subject matter of objected to claim 9 and intervening claims 3, 4, and 8. Claim 5 was amended for consistency. No new matter has been added thereby.

In view of the above amendments and following remarks, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of all grounds of objection and rejection, and passage of claims 1, 2, and 5-7 to allowance in due course.

1. The drawings are objected to as failing to comply with 37 C.F.R. 1.83(a). Applicants have cancelled claims 10, 11, and 15, without prejudice, thereby rendering the objection moot. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to the drawings.
2. The specification is objected to because the abstract includes the phrase “is provided” and the description of FIGS. 7A-7D and 10A-10D is not adequate.

Applicants have amended the abstract to remove the phrase “is provided.” Applicants have also amended the description of FIGS. 7A-7D and 10A-10D consistent with the specification. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objections to the specification.

3. Claims 8, 9, and 11 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph. Applicants have cancelled claims 8, 9, and 11, thereby rendering the rejection of those claims moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 8, 9, and 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

4. Claims 1-6, 8, 10, and 12-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hansel. Applicants have cancelled claims 3, 4, 8, 10, and 12-18, thereby rendering the rejection moot with respect to those claims. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as applied to the remaining claims, as amended.

Applicants have amended independent claim 1, from which claims 2, 5, and 6 depend, to include the allowable subject matter of claim 9 and intervening claims 3, 4, and 8, thereby rendering the rejection moot with regard to claim 1. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1, 2, 5, and 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being anticipated by Hansel.

5. Claim 7 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansel in view of Annes. Applicants respectfully traverse this rejection as applied to the claims, as amended.

As discussed above, Applicants have amended independent claim 1, from which claim 7 depends, to include the allowable subject matter of claim 9 and intervening claims 3, 4, and 8. Because claim 7 depends indirectly from claim 1, claim 7 is also allowable. In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 7 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansel in view of Annes.

6. Claim 11 is rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansel in view of Dodson. Applicants have cancelled claim 11, thereby rendering the rejection of that claim moot. Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claim 11 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over Hansel in view of Dodson.

7. Claim 9 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims. Applicants have amended claim 1 to include the allowable subject matter of claim 9 and intervening claims 3, 4, and 8, and have cancelled claims 3, 4, 8, and 9, thereby rendering the objection moot with respect to those claims.

Accordingly, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration and withdrawal of the objection to claim 9, as being dependent upon a rejected base claim.

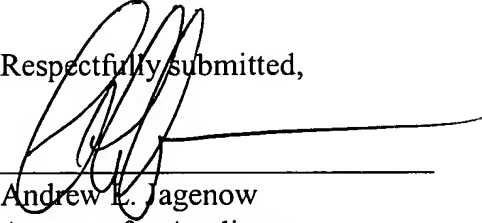
CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration, withdrawal of all grounds of rejection and objection, and allowance of claims 1, 2, and 5-7 in due course. The Examiner is invited to contact Applicants' undersigned representative by telephone at the number listed below to discuss any outstanding issues.

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Respectfully submitted,



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